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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
of the
**NATIONAL
SEX EQUITY
DEMONSTRATION
PROJECT**

**BROWARD COUNTY SCHOOLS, FLORIDA
and the
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
1980-1983**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Prepared by
**Bernadine Evans Stake
Robert E. Stake
Laura Morgan
James Pearsol**

**CIRCE — THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

National Sex Equity Demonstration Project, Broward County, Contract	2
CIRCE's Evaluation Design	2
Evaluation Team Findings	3
Program Description	4
Project Staff and Responsibilities, Division of Labour	5
A Typical Day in the Project Work	6
Portrayal of a Teacher Workshop	7
Classroom Observations	8
Survey Data on Importance of the Problem	9
Survey Data on What Teachers Should Do About the Problem	10
Survey Data on Accomplishment	11
An Evaluation Issue: National Purposes or Local Purposes	12
An Evaluation Issue: Teacher Inservice Training	13
Feedback from Stakeholders	14
Program Quality	15
The Project's Legacy	16

PROJECT CONTRACT.

Under the auspices of Educational Amendments of 1978 (p. 1 95-561), particularly the reauthorized Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA), The University of Miami entered into contract with the U.S. Department of Education to provide a comprehensive national demonstration site in the Broward County (FL) Schools to "showcase the use of materials and strategies promoting educational equity for women." After a planning year, the National Sex Equity Demonstration Project of Broward County was to have three years to "change change-agents from all parts of the country through training programs and exhibiting, in model settings, the use and impact of selected sex and race fair materials."

EVALUATION DESIGN.

Program evaluation responsibility was assumed by the Center for Instructional Research and Curriculum Evaluation (CIRCE) of the University of Illinois under subcontract with the University of Miami. As outlined in the WEEA request for proposals and in the Miami proposal itself, the evaluation purpose was to organize an overview, collect data, analyze observations, and report to the Project staff and others. The approach to evaluation was "naturalistic-responsive" as described by Stake and by Guba & Lincoln, with principal reliance on observation and interview to assist the staff in examining issues most important to operational effectiveness and overall program quality. Various interview protocols and survey instruments were used to discern the perceived importance of equity education in these schools, to gather data on what teachers and others were doing (and ought to be doing), and on what the Project was accomplishing. Inasmuch as the Project was responsible for review of teaching materials, development of a model site, and demonstration of equity-oriented teaching, the evaluation plan called for study of these processes and advice on improving them.

The co-directors of the evaluation work, Robert and Bernadine Evans Stake, were responsible to the Director of the Demonstration Project, Rita Bornstein. The evaluation team consisted of 1 FTE (the Stakes and Jim Pearsol) from the University of Illinois and 1 FTE (Laura Morgan) from the University of Miami.



EVALUATION TEAM FINDINGS

1. During three years of Project implementation, there was visible increase in awareness of sex equity issues throughout Broward County's 162 schools, with greater activism, of course, in the thirteen "demonstration" schools.
2. The staff's review of sex equity instructional materials was thorough and extensive, fulfilling that contractual task in an exemplary way.
3. The number of teachers and administrators spending at least an hour in Project activities exceeded 1000. Perhaps 80 became involved in a sustained way. Infusion fell short of original hope and expectation. Though substantial, the extension into additional schools was difficult and slow.
4. Partly because outside visitors lacked travel funds, partly because there were ample requests from within this large district, the Project's demonstration of exemplary classroom practices was put on mostly for Broward people.
5. The Project gave prime attention to sex equity coordinators and interns rather than to the masses of Broward educators. These supporters (a cadre of 80 or so) raised consciousness at their schools but were not able to get many other teachers actively involved.
6. A very large amount of Project time was spent in reorganization of thought and responsibility as leadership changed twice. Able replacements were found. Purpose and scope narrowed with each change.
7. The Project was unsuccessful in getting formal changes made in District curricula. Equity issue-oriented teaching did not become explicitly required. The Project worked to include equity ideas in basic skills teaching, but the priority and volume of skill objectives leave little time for raising equity issues.
8. Staff development sessions for Broward teachers and administrators covered important topics and, after the very first one, were extremely well received.
9. Teachers at elementary and middle schools became much more actively engaged in Project activities than high school teachers. Female educators and students were substantially more supportive than male. School counselors did not become prominent in the work of the Project.
10. Even though the issues of equity education were controversial and easily mixed with feminist and other activisms, and often sensationalized in the national media, the Project adroitly avoided stirring hostility and resentment in the schools and community.
11. District administrators were generous hosts, but the Superintendent and School Board did not see this to be a vital undertaking. The former Project Director (now working in the "Equal Opportunity" office) was officially encouraged to continue the work after federal funding ended, but plans and commitments were slow in appearing.
12. Generally speaking, teachers, students and others felt that sex equity is an important goal but that presently there is no problem in their school.
13. Some participating teachers reported that promoting equity reduces classroom management problems, that girls and boys treat each other with more respect, that more meaningful friendships are formed now between girls and boys.
14. Even among those who expressed greatest support for equity education, few became "active". After developing an equity lesson plan or after teaching a lesson on stereotyping, most enthusiastic teachers accepted a passive role in the equity movement. This was consistent with the Project aim and expectation, but a growing band of activists is needed for further infusion across district and nation.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

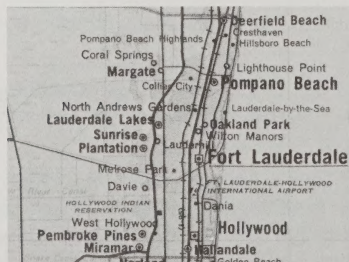
This Project was created in 1979 to provide demonstration of sex equity teaching. Funded through the Women's Educational Equity Act it was one of five centers, each in a different type of community — this one in a complex suburban district. Previous research had shown inequities for both male and female students, much of it inadvertently through sex role stereotyping. Materials had been developed to increase teacher and student awareness of discrimination. Seen needed next was an introduction of these findings and materials to rank-and-file educators in elementary and secondary schools across the county. Demonstration projects had become a standard step in federal educational opportunity efforts. The University of Miami joined with the Broward County School District in 1978 to respond to the federal request for proposals.

The two principal thrusts of the Project were to review materials to be used by regular teachers and to demonstrate how classrooms (and a whole district) could diminish discrimination based on gender. To accomplish a classroom review of materials they first had to do technical studies to determine feasibility for particular classrooms. To accomplish the demonstration of equity education district-wide they first had to generate a network of sympathetic educators, help them develop skills needed for demonstration, and to come to understand the resources and problem-solving mechanisms of the District. At first it was expected that the major demonstration would be to live audiences of visitors from outside the County. Later it was apparent that *national* demonstration would have to be through testimony at professional meetings, by written report, and in various informal and indirect ways. A final task was to generate the strongest possible organization within the District to survive federal phase-out and to participate in a hoped-for national discourse on sex-equity education.

The Project was of course aimed at children's learnings and opportunities to learn. But teacher staff development was the great immediate task. Primarily through workshops and an intern program, but indirectly through news media stories, evaluation questionnaires and personal contacts, the District was informed about inequities and about how discrimination might be overcome.

THE SETTING.

The public school district in Broward County identifies itself as the largest fully accredited school district in the country, with 162 schools, just under 130,000 students, and over 13,000 full-time employees. The Superintendent now for four years is William McFatter who served many years as the District's finance and legislation specialist. Marie Harrington chairs a seven-member School Board, elected for staggered two year terms at-large from the 1285 square-mile district.



The center city is Fort Lauderdale. The District is in the northerly part of a continuous metropolitan sweep from Coral Gables through Miami north to Palm Beach. It stretches from Atlantic surf through horse ranches and orange groves far into the Everglades. The District population is 23% black and 3% Hispanic. It is a resort area, a retirement area, with great wealth — yet impoverished, with shantytowns and transient taxpayers unwilling fully to support the Broward need for education.

PROJECT PEOPLE

The Project was placed at the District's Nova Research and Development Center (Nova High and Nova Middle, Eisenhower and Blanche Forman Elementaries). As special purpose schools the Nova four have district-wide open-enrollment — with a waiting list. The R & D involvement is now more legend than fact — currently few sponsors have money for research. Locating the Project there was logical not only because of the tradition but because Nova teachers had a reputation for concern about such issues as equal educational opportunity. Later, activities spread to "a Ring" of nine additional schools.

Project aims were closely related to work already going on at the District Office of Comprehensive Planning for Equal Opportunities (OCPEO) where compliance with equal opportunity policies and regulations was centered. It was decided however to place this Project in the Division of Curriculum to emphasize its educational character. Thus the Project came under the administrative responsibility of Division Director Nelson Moore rather than under compliance officer Hayward Benson. Moore's primary attention during this period was on instructional management with basic skills "prioritized" through a Pupil Progression Program (PPP) and a student testing arrangement called the "Answer System".

Broward teachers were often at odds with "management" — over an array of issues, PPP being one of them. They were represented officially by the Classroom Teachers Association (CTA), an NEA affiliate led by Art Kennedy. For most of the Project's final year teachers worked under protest, without a contract. When teachers voted down a compromise settlement in March the Board imposed a contract. One bone of contention all three years was staff development, with administrators wanting mandated participation in *its* inservice training and teachers wanting voluntary sessions set up by teachers. Demonstration Project plans did not anticipate the obstacle this was to become.



DIVISION OF LABOR.

For the planning year and 15 months to follow, the Director of NSEDP was Rita Bornstein (left). An equity advocate on the national scene for many years, she conceptualized and prepared the proposal. Officially, she remained on campus in Miami where she headed the Southeast Sex Desegregation Assistance Center (SSDAC). In November 1981 she accepted a full-time position in the University's Development Office, but remained the "principal investigator" of the Project with budgetary and policy authority. The original on-site coordinator was Karen Parks, a Broward teacher active in the CTA (right). Parks was widely known and respected in both educational and political circles. When Bornstein changed jobs Parks became Project Director for a year, then accepted a more permanent position as Compliance Specialist for OCPEO.



As "implementation" began the on-site staff was three persons strong (plus Laura Morgan of the evaluation team). Joan Hinden (left), another Broward teacher active in CTA, was in charge of materials review. Hazel Armbrister (right), Broward teacher also, headed logistics for demonstrations, workshops and visitations. Later, Nova teachers Joe Burke and Sheila Levine were temporarily assigned (one year each) to work with sex equity coordinators and teachers in Project schools. Joan Hinden succeeded Karen Parks as Site Coordinator. For that final year Kathy Shea was named Project Director, under Bornstein, remaining officed at SSDAC in Miami. These administrative changes occurred largely because continued federal funding repeatedly was in doubt.



A TYPICAL DAY

The rain has stopped but the four parking spaces marked SEX EQUITY are awash, so Joan Hinden, NSEDP Site Coordinator, parks in the teachers' lot. She greets Principals Ed Boyack and Sue Alvord in front of his office, passes between their two buildings, past the tile-mural-moonlanding, to the door enscribed National Sex Equity Demonstration Project. A short climb puts her in the Project's windowless suite. Views physically limited have been spiritually stretched by poster after poster testifying to career choices and lifestyles no longer unthinkable. She drops purse, sandwich and papers on her desk and hurries down the hall to the Conference/Materials room to make sure "Free to Be You and Me" has been returned so the next user can pick it up.

It has been. With a sigh she returns to wrestle with the accounts. She needs to hire additional teacher substitutes, the demand for which had been understated in the 1983 budget. Treva Simpson has pulled the file but as usual the district entries are not up-to-date. Just how much money is available is uncertain. She telephones Kathy Shea later in the morning, and together they make some guesses.

Sheila Levine stops to smile hello, having spent a quarter hour pulling together some new materials which Joe Knetsch will review for possible use in seventh grade social studies. She is headed for a chat with Nova High's Sex Equity Coordinator but is called to the phone to talk to Yveta George about plans for this year's Career Day at Hunt Elementary School. Before leaving she offers a word of encouragement to Frances Chaddock who is typing another revised draft of material for the Elementary School Sex Equity Handbook, a "coordination task" worked out with the four other national demonstration projects.

Hazel Armbrister spends most of the morning tabulating evaluation feedback from the teacher workshop on migrant education. Interrupted, she takes a call from teacher Pat Lovarco who has decided to attend the Middle School Science Teacher Internship.

It is humid. The air isn't circulating well. Nevertheless, Joan spends her lunch hour in the office. Laura Morgan, with Barbeque Fritos and Tab in hand stops in to comment about the morning's observation at Ramblewood and to say that Supt. McFatter had signed the letter asking principals (in the 15% sample schools) to ask teachers to cooperate in the survey. Laura does not sit down, not because the chair is stacked but because she needs to get at her case study write-ups. Still, they spend a few minutes discussing the dilemma of sex equity coordinators, especially those active in CTA, encouraging teachers to "Work to the Rule" (Accept no extra time assignments during contract negotiations), yet trying to get them together on sex equity matters.

The afternoon continues as the morning, only moreso. Now everyone is writing something: Joan the bi-monthly report, Hazel letters of confirmation, and Sheila updating the Inventory. And telephoning. Late in the afternoon Bernadine Stake arrives to begin two weeks of interviews with principals. She and Joan meet briefly to chat about the AERA award Joan is to accept for the Project (in Montreal). Joan invites Bernadine to supper and they head for the now-bone-dry parking lot.



Karen Parks as Demonstration Teacher.

WORKSHOPS FOR TEACHERS

A long day of training for potential demonstration teachers was coming to a close. All present had undergone equity sessions before. Today's was different: more depth, more problems, and the need for commitment more clear.

Participants had been asked to do a micro-teaching demonstration, then to be critiqued. Karen Parks asked for reactions. A woman thought, then said:

"I want more of this. I thought I knew all I could about (equity). Today I learned I have a lot more to learn."

There were nods of agreement around the room. As earlier and later, most teachers learning about equity wanted more: more materials, more strategies, more time to study, and more interaction with the NSEDP staff. As Year Two began the word spread: "The sex equity people have something to say."

Some workshops were conducted by outside consultants — favorites were Myra and David Sadker of American University. In one session the Sadkers called for recognition of discriminatory classroom interaction patterns, such as teachers praising boys more for intellectual quality while praising girls more for neatness and compliance. But even with outside presenters the effectiveness was largely due to staff preparation, and particularly to the leadership of Parks.

On one occasion Kathy Pierce, a math specialist, asked NSEDP for a consultant on Math Anxiety. Sandra Turner, University of Southern Florida, came and ran two 3-hour sessions. She used video tapes, exercises, and discussions to emphasize teacher responsibility for reducing stress, especially for girls.

Joan Hinden and Bob Zeitlin, a Nova High science teacher, presented a short workshop, "Project Equality: Women in Science." Ten people attended. Hinden told of WEEA and NSEDP, identifying services teachers might use. Zeitlin discussed famous women scientists. Not having been exposed to their accomplishments in school, he said he felt cheated.

Phyllis Bergsman, Western High teacher, discussed her course, "Images of Women and Men in Literature." Ruth Gudinas, University of Wisconsin, spoke to media specialists. Project staff people were proud of all these efforts. Ending the first year Hazel Armbrister said:

"The main success of the Project is the number of teachers who have participated in the planned workshops. We're making a name for ourselves around the County. Each time we bring in new faces they tell someone else."



By the end of the third year the Project had tallied 3733 educator participations (not subtracting repeats). In almost all instances attendance was voluntary; most attenders came already favourably disposed. Most workshops ended with evaluation with participants typically saying, "Very worthwhile."

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

The evaluation team, particularly Laura Morgan, spent many hours observing teaching and learning in the classrooms of Broward schools. In February, 1983, Laura went to Fairway Elementary to observe a demonstration in Vern Beneby's third grade. Several Project interns were observing too.

First there was a lengthy discussion of things men and women do. Several boys emphasized tasks women never or seldom do, such as play NFL football. The girls claimed that women can become capable of doing whatever they want to do. Ms. Beneby tried to draw attention to stereotyping and to whether they were relying on opinion or direct experience. She reminded them of the morning reading, *Snow White*. "Do you remember Snow White was described as having 'skin as white as snow'. Have you ever seen anyone with skin white as snow?"

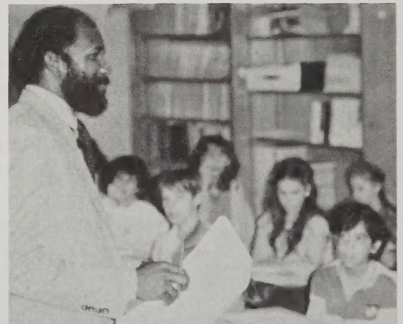
They had not. "How would a Black or Indian or Asian child feel if this meant beauty? Would they feel beautiful?" (Several no's.) "Have they stereotyped Snow White?" A boy said, "Indians can be beautiful." "Yes, Andy, and Black boys and girls and Asian children can be beautiful — and they don't have skin white as snow. What does stereotype mean?"

Stephanie said, "...that you are beautiful if you have skin white as snow." The teacher replied, "Right. Good. When you are reading books, you should think about this. Ask yourself if what you are reading is true, and think about it. Now, next I want you to draw a different Snow White. Not the one who stays home, does the chores, and waits for the dwarfs to come home."

The children settled to their task and the teacher and guests circulated about the room. Many new Snow Whites emerged. One wore Jordache jeans, one resembled E.T. One boy said, "Remember in the story when Snow White was being bossed around? Well, now she's giving orders." His dwarfs were busy cleaning house. Other Snow Whites were travelling, catching animals, rescuing falling dwarfs, winning a black belt in judo. Some Snow Whites were Black.

Back at the Project office the interns discussed the scene with Joan Hinden. Lonnie said, "This was mostly about female roles. I think both need to be emphasized." Anita was impressed with the children's responses and their "familiarity with the lingo." Walter added, "The younger the children, the more you see shocking biases." And so on.

In her day's report, Laura wrote, "Interns would have benefited more (1) had the staff worked more closely with the demonstration teacher; (2) had lesson plans been available; and (3) had interns been better briefed." She found the de-briefings well done. Laura shared these observations with Joan.



Social studies teacher Boyd Ivey and his Nova Middle students discuss equity provisions in the Constitution.

PERCEIVED NEED

SURVEY DATA.

The evaluation plan called for questionnaires to supplement the observation and interview data. General, aggregatable information from large numbers of respondents was obtained by occasional brief surveys, often item-sampled. The content of the questions was both "What do you see happening?" and "How do you feel?" Items were developed to provide information in four categories:

1. the perceived need for and importance of sex equity.
2. what the aims of educators ought to be.
3. the readiness of educators here to pursue these aims.
4. the present effort of educators here.

The impact of the Project is indicated in part by change on these items.

IMPORTANCE OF SEX EQUITY EDUCATION.

Repeatedly we asked teachers:

A5. *Do you feel that sex role stereotyping has been a problem at your school?* ____ Yes, a large problem ____ Somewhat a problem
____ Not a problem at all.

And with little variability over the three years about 3% said "large problem", 36% said "somewhat", and 61% said "no problem". The results were essentially the same at elementary, middle and secondary schools. We also asked:

B2. *This District has identified sex-equity education as one of its goals. Do you support this goal?* ____ Strongly support ____ Support it with reservations ____ Undecided ____ Oppose it to some extent ____ Strongly oppose it.

Omitting the "undecided", over 90% of the principals and usually over 80% of the teachers supported the goal. In Item A1 we asked about profound impediment:

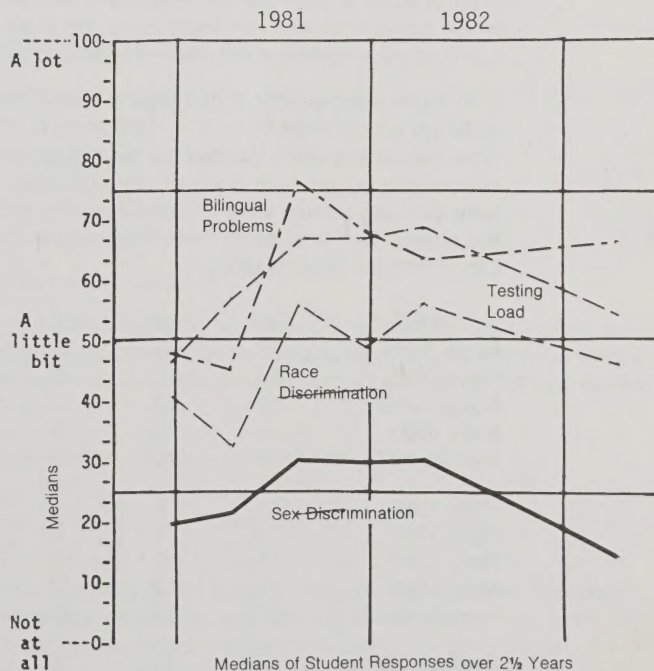
A1. *In the schools of this district — as you see it — how much are each of the following interfering with students getting a good education?*

	A lot	A little bit	Not at all	No opinion
Racial Discrimination	—	—	—	—
Discrimination according to sex	—	—	—	—
Bilingual problems	—	—	—	—
Overemphasis on testing	—	—	—	—

Student results over time are shown in the figure to the right. A large group of Nova High students were queried for three years (they wearied of the query). Sex discrimination was seen as much less an obstacle to good education than the other three. First there was increase in perception that it was an obstacle; at the end they increasingly perceived it being taken care of. At the other Project high schools sex discrimination medians went from 38 to 34 to 33 over the 14 month involvement.

As for Broward teachers, more than half of them (and almost all males) said sex discrimination was not an obstacle at all. But at Nova schools (the original Project schools) there was greater awareness of such an obstacle.

The Project aim was to increase awareness of the problem and to foster responses that alleviate the problem. Thus the curve at a successful school would rise and fall as it did at Nova. (Of course, other explanations are possible.) What we have here across Broward is a widespread view that sex equity is important as a principle but not a major problem, not something to get very excited over.



TEACHER ACTIVISM

In our surveys we asked teachers and students (and, on one occasion, principals) what they saw their school's teachers and administrators doing about sex equity. We wanted to confirm our observation and interview data and to portray particularly the involvement of teachers in this NSEDP effort. We also asked what "ought to be". The main item asked was:

C1. As you see it, what are your school's teachers and administrators now doing about sex equity?

- _____ Most are not concerned about the issue
- _____ Most watch for problems but seldom get involved
- _____ Most try to eliminate sex role stereotyping
- _____ Most believe boys and girls should be treated differently.

("Activism" Scale: indifferent = 0; passive = 10; active = 20; opposed = -10.)

When administered to teachers in a 15% sample of Broward schools in May of 1983 (excluding NSEDP-active schools) with a response rate of 72%, the 517 teachers responded to the four options respectively: 28%, 13%, 50%, 5%. 22 of them omitted the item. Thus in this reference group exactly half of the teachers saw their peers in their own school actively engaged in eliminating gender inequities; about a quarter saw unconcern. Using the scale values above (what we called our Activism Scale), this group scored 11.

Also that May, all teachers in Project schools (Nova and Ring) were asked that same item. Of 526 teachers: 22%, 23%, 50%, 5% with 22 omits and a scale score of 12. Half the teachers here too saw their peers as "activists", but fewer (81 against 146) saw their peers as "unconcerned". The suggestion here is that the teachers saw themselves as actively engaged, but fewer Project teachers saw indifference around them.

As with item A1 and many others, this item works two ways. As the Project is successful in raising consciousness, people see more indifference around them; but also see more effort, especially as the Project gets lessons taught and events (e.g., Career Days) happening. A drop in scale scores can be interpreted as an increased realization of shortcoming even when activism is actually increasing. Here as with other survey data it is important to corroborate responses with other observations. Consider an example:

At Nova Middle School, perhaps the most actively participating school in the District, Activism scores went from 13 in 1982 down to 10, then up to 16 in the next two years. Direct observation and participants logs (see chapter on the Middle Schools) indicated that this school started out with a bit of self-righteous air, lost its outspoken dissidents, saw its principal take a more visible leadership role, and finally collectively embraced the work of the nearby Demonstration Project. Scale values not surprisingly went down, then up.

Other Activism observations:

OBS:Tchr	Elem	Midl	High	Jrs	In total, male and female observers saw pretty much the same role behavior. Principals and teachers also saw things much the same. Students reported much less "activism" among teachers, more "unconcern". Though equity advocates saw but modest effort District-wide, half the Broward educators said the profession was actively involved.
Nova, 1981	17	13	9	4	
Nova, 1982	14	10	8	4	
Nova, 1983	13	16	10		
Male 1983	--	16	8		
Female 1983	13	16	13		
Ring, 1981	10	6	--	4	
Ring, 1982	13	8	8	6	
Ring, 1983	15	12	11		
Male 1983	14	12	12		
Female 1983	15	12	10		
Broward '83	13	11	10		

(NOTE: Standards differ, and, more importantly, they are reflexive. Such a Project influences definition of its own success.)

ACCOMPLISHMENT

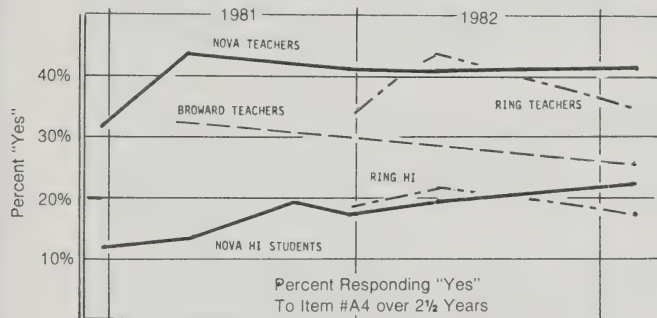
Success and failure of a project is measured in various ways: how well it adjusts its goals to circumstances; how little trauma it creates; the amount of work done; the quality of its effort; the increase in awareness of what needs to be done; the change in conditions it accomplishes; and its impact on various persons. This Project has much to show for itself on all these counts — in no way spectacular, sometimes a mixture of good and bad; but generally creditable.

The survey data repeatedly indicated that awareness was increasing, that new responses were being learned. Elsewhere we learned that sustained involvement was usually not to be expected. Only a few workshop participants heeded the Biblical admonishment, "Go and do thou likewise." They avowed they were activated, but "sensitized" is a better way to describe the impact on most participants.

As for improvement in social conditions in school and community we followed one survey item with particular interest: (Changing *this* is a tall order)

A4. Do you feel that girls have to overcome more social pressures than boys to enroll in advanced science and math courses? ____ Yes
____ No

"Yes" responses from teachers and students plotted as follows:



Teachers perceived the pressures more often than students, but elementary teachers more so (not shown) than high school — which may or may not indicate it is more feeling than knowing. For teachers the increased "sensitivity" came quickly on Project implementation; for students (not surprisingly) it came more slowly.

At Project's end in 13 Project and 16 Nonproject schools we asked teachers:

QC12 As you see it, approximately what percentage of students in your school notice instances of sex role stereotyping in curricular materials?

Median percentages for the groups (quite highly reliable) were as follows:

N	Elem	Midl	High
147 Nova Teachers	10%	14%	4%
392 Ring Teachers	10%	4%	4%
493 Nonproject Tchrs	3%	3%	3%

If statistical tests were applied even the differences between 3% and 4% would be "significant".

The percentage of "sensitized" youngsters is low at each level. At Nova and Ring (the Project) clusters, and particularly at the lower grades where role stereotyping was brought up for discussion, the teachers consistently reported a higher awareness. Of course, this is teacher testimony, not a direct test of awareness. We also asked teachers about their own "sensitivities":

QC14 Compared to a year ago, **are you now more aware** of sex discrimination occurring in school?

	Elem		Middle		High	
	Proj	Non	Proj	Non	Proj	Non
No, I am not aware of sex discrimination here	31%	66%	39%	66%	42%	65%
Yes, I am more aware of it now	49%	21%	43%	21%	39%	19%
No, I was very much aware of it a year ago	29%	12%	18%	13%	19%	16%

Compared to those elsewhere in Broward County, teachers in 13 project schools self-reported substantial increase in awareness of discrimination. The awareness difference was striking at the elementary level, but showed up for all grades. Two-thirds of the teachers in nonproject schools indicated "no awareness" of sex discrimination, against one-third in the Project. As indicated elsewhere, awareness was increased across the entire school district.

NATIONAL OR LOCAL PURPOSES: An Issue

The purposes of this Sex Equity Demonstration Project interested many diverse parties, including Assistant Superintendent Dorothy Orr, Broward industrialist David Rush, National Advisory Board member Holly Knox and Nova student Francine Brandt. Each held certain hopes. School aims widely voiced throughout the District at this time included: maximizing student performance (on tests), minimizing school costs, and ending mandatory bussing. It was not expected that the purposes of this Demonstration Project would interact with those aims — and largely they did not.

There were many constituencies within Broward: the administrators, the unions, the churches, etc., with interests similar and different even within their smallest subdivisions. There also was a major constituency *outside* Broward: U.S. taxpayers, also with common and contradictory interests. It was particularly noticeable to us of the evaluation team that the local Broward purposes and the national purposes were far from identical. Given the opportunity costs involved, a gain in Broward would not necessarily be a gain for the wider sex equity movement.

Project people clearly recognized both sets of purposes. They had created one of the five National Demonstration Projects charged with guiding change-agents in all U.S. schools. Yet they also were to assist in the development of a model district where not only exemplary classroom practices could be observed, but where the problems of sex role stereotyping would be addressed by all.

NSEDP's award-winning review of contemporary instructional materials is of value more to the nation than locally. The intensive training of interns was of more value locally than nationally. Regularly the Project staff had to choose — even though the choice was seldom recognizable in these terms. Careful thought was given. And more often than not — as seen by the evaluation group — the local purposes were served more directly and more devotedly than the national.

The national purpose was less immediate. Where were its advocates? There were few visitors from afar. Few people at professional meetings told them to accentuate national pursuits. Their National Advisory Board urged maximum effort to a strong and durable office *within Broward*. Federal monitors processed NSEDP's reports and participated in leadership meetings in Washington and elsewhere, but apparently did not raise this elusive issue. Rita Bornstein understood the national obligation — and reiterated commitment to the plan pursued. The other staff members were attached to the Broward Schools and wanted most to see a local dream come true.

In most schools, as in Broward's Western Attucks, and Perry, there are teachers disposed to equity education, yet needing allies and ideas. Unfortunately, the good experience in Broward will probably not become known outside. For those afar, a demonstration did not occur. These NSEDP people were not specialists in national media, political influence, or knowledge production and utilization. They were teachers, shrewd and dynamic leaders working with small groups of fellow teachers. They worked to influence their colleagues and to review nationally-available materials. They did not, for example, develop exportable models of sex equity diffusion for districts otherwise like theirs but having no outside funding. They worked little at getting national publicity. And probably wisely. The nation's schools are little influenced by mere information, good or bad (see Fullan). The "Demonstration Strategy" was known by specialists in research dissemination (e.g., House, McLaughlin) to be a high risk venture, and it had less chance of success here when local purposes got high priority.

Knowing what ultimately would stand up in such exchanges as Congressional hearings, the national leaders of sex equity education made their decisions, harbored their resources. At the Broward site a competent staff did a good job of what it intended to do. As is so often the case with federal projects in the schools, this NSEDP became more a valued subsidy to local education than provider of national guidance and encouragement. A bird in the hand, so to speak.

TEACHER INSERVICE TRAINING

One of the ingenious moves Rita Bornstein made was to staff the Project with Karen Parks and other on-site teacher leaders. This not only oriented the work to teacher concerns but provided a network (the Classroom Teachers Association) for the highly personalized implementation ahead. As Michael Fullan, Canadian specialist on school change, points out, improvement in education rests greatly on voluntary teacher action.

Having done some equity work there, Bornstein and Parks set out to change Nova and the rest of this huge district. Formal and informal needs assessment assured them that Nova was not so proficient in equity practice that Demonstration could start immediately. The Project proposal did not spell it out in so many words but the great work ahead was that of teacher inservice training.

Teaching (including administering) remains a noble profession in that it usually is devoted to what is seen to be best for clients (children, parents, taxpayers). What is best for practitioners themselves or for "the system" is not ignored, but is not paramount. In spite of the bureaucratization of education teachers still have great leeway in deciding what is best for youngsters. Almost every teacher works hard at socializing youngsters. Even so, teachers differ widely as to what is good behavior, particularly as to conformance to social customs such as those embodied in sex role stereotyping.

Our observations of NSEDP-Broward indicated paradoxically that equity was seen to be an important educational goal — and that few problems were being recognized in one's own school. Teachers saw themselves as active in eliminating inequity but students and equity leaders saw them as passive or even indifferent. Bornstein's inservice teacher training task was largely one of consciousness raising.

The District had an elaborate staff development program. Teachers were obligated for a minimum annual participation — during working hours. For the most part they were free to choose what they would improve.

For skills that teachers *want* to upgrade (e.g., use of computers) such an arrangement can be effective (see Fullan). For understandings that the District wants (e.g., how to operate the Answer System) or that the society wants (e.g., how to diminish teacher constraints on equal educational opportunity) — but that teachers *do not* feel a need for — the District's program was impotent. Supt. McFatter agreed, "We haven't been able to make it work. Nor does it seem has anyone else." The Project held sessions outside the District format, as well as within.

With such a huge district the Project aimed to and was able to keep its workshops filled with the curious and the enthusiastic. But what of the others? What of the District obligation (the Project obligation to foster equitable treatment and awareness of equity issues in every classroom)? Such a goal was enormously beyond the scope of this Project.

Bruce Joyce, John Elliot and other educational researchers have developed criteria of effective inservice programs. The Karen Parks-Joan Hinden cohort met the criteria well, except follow-up (the universal shortcoming) was often insufficient. The workshops were well done. To be sure, the District's sex equity inservice responsibility was only begun. In the three years, Broward teachers offended by sex equity advocacy became quiet, but indifference remained. Would it be better to contend with indifference directly? The issue was moot because no mechanism for dealing with indifference existed.

FEEDBACK

Jane Leone, Associate Supt.: *"All across the county the project has made a tremendous difference in the way teachers think, in the quickness with which they recognize equity issues."*

Rita Bornstein, Project Director: *"An important legacy of the Project will be our deliberations about the meaning of equity education."*

Eighth grade teacher: *"It helped my students' self-esteem."*

Elementary teacher: *"This Project has raised the awareness level of our faculty, but I've seen little change in treatment of boys and girls."*

High school teacher: *"Other than athletics, how is it a problem?"*

Coach: *"Last year I had a girl on the wrestling team. I was chastized by fellow teachers in this 'pilot' school and told by the athletic director to get rid of her. When I didn't I was threatened with losing my job. This year they took it. Need I say more?"*

Fifth grade teacher: *"The moments of insight and gratification have been endless; for example, a shy child who hid behind a bulky sweater, hat pulled down, writing a story about becoming President; seeing fellow teachers unite in the cause of equity; etc."*

Middle school teacher: *"It is silly to merely coat boys and girls with the same 'equity' paint — when psychologically, physically and otherwise there **are** differences. Practically speaking, a kid needs every opportunity. We must not stand in their way. I worry lest this project take a propagandistic approach to undermine those universal and socially necessary understandings that hold a society together."*

Administrator: *"Recently a broader understanding of what equity is has been apparent in the work of the District's Office of Equal Opportunity Planning. I would like to see the same happen in the Management Academy."*

High school teacher: *"The good is done when a teacher makes a commitment in front of a class."*

Nelson Moore, Director of Curriculum: *"Change won't occur without inservice training. This past term (spring, 1982) we were able to make the NSEDP workshops mandatory for one representative from each school. I certainly hope Karen and her staff made an impact."*

Kathy Shea, Project Staff: *"One lesson I've learned is that the demonstration model is more effective than the desegregation model. If we compare Broward and Dade Counties some years from now I bet Broward will be ahead."*

PROGRAM QUALITY

It is difficult not to damn this Project with faint praise. In some ways these few people did more than could reasonably be expected. They did cause there to be a higher sensitivity to the offensive nature and potential embarrassment of unequal treatment, or even the unnecessary divisioning, of girls against boys.

They conducted teacher workshops that participants found better organized and with more important things to say than other staff development programs. They obtained thoughtful user-reviews of a great body of instructional material and added to the collection with lesson plans and teacher-made variations. In a huge, conservative, overly-centralized district they changed from butt of crude jokes to respected unit, avoiding polarized confrontations of an Anita Bryant type. They followed their plan and pulled their oar.

Still, and not surprisingly, the District remains largely illiterate of the meanings of sex equity. Advocates are ineffective in demonstrating the costs to personal freedom and social enlightenment of sex role stereotyping. It is not apparent to the ordinary teacher that even the girl or boy who aspires to a traditional life can be to a degree impoverished by the sex discrimination in her/his classroom. Those insights are rare, counter-intuitive, implying that people do not know what is best for them — and remain quickly denied.

The Project apparently failed to get the District to put budgetary resources into the continuation of this work. Had the Project been more persuasive the District might have set programmatic goals for equity teaching. Even if not monitored these statements would give an aggrieved person further "standing", a better basis for appealing for redress. The Project did not have a profound impact on the District.

Nor did it play a significant national role. It contributed some important works to the storehouse of reference materials on equity education. It enriched its visitors, but almost none came from outside Broward. It sent speakers and displays to professional meetings across the country, but its effort was very modest. As change agents these people were amateurs, with a three-year promotional budget less than Lite Beer spends in one commercial.

Changes of such magnitude as suggested above of course are unrealistic, and would be avoided — if they were not part of the rhetoric under which money is obtained from Congress and in the proposals of those who get funded (including this one). Making realistic promises is not the way to get federal support, for the funding offices "have" to show that they have contracts for major social change at bargain rates.

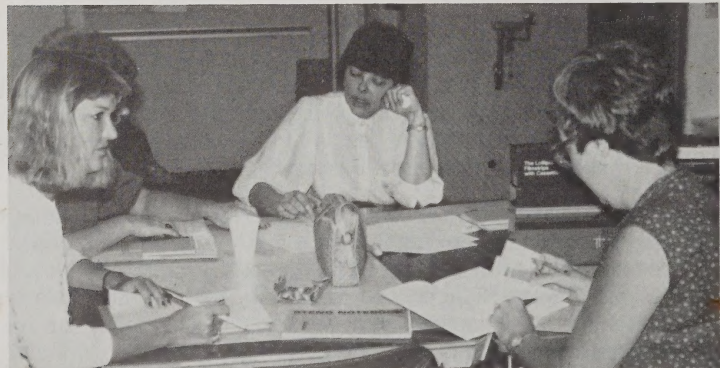
By *realistic* standards the Project has been a success. It created a legacy, a large legacy for the District, as spelled out on the next page, and a small legacy for the nation. In an environment in which teachers are rewarded for narrowing their responsibilities, the NSEDP encouraged a tenacious preservation of compassionate and creative relationships between students and teachers and administrators. Against unending rejoinders that masculine pronouns and occupational labels (fireman) are of negligible importance, the staff patiently and resolutely presented the facts on the imbalance of privileges in this world. They could have chosen other strategies, and weighted their aims differently, but they did well what they organized to do.

The National Sex Equity Demonstration Project in Broward County, Florida, existed for four years. It was phased out in the spring term, 1983, with its last weeks of federal funding near at hand. Even though it engaged only a small minority of the 8000 teachers directly, it left a sizable legacy.

The District now has a corps of teachers and others experienced in examining equity issues, teaching about equity, and helping colleagues improve their practices. Broward retains a substantial resource, usable locally, regionally or nationally. Whether or not it will be used in the future depends on the emergence of leadership in Broward, in Florida, and elsewhere. The Present is beset with economic trauma and institutional inflexibility. It remains to be seen whether new inspiration emerges from this completed work.

In perhaps a small way this Project helped keep alive a reputation in Broward for pioneering the development of school practices. The actual involvement in curriculum development, materials tryout, and demonstration was here (as usual) limited to a small network of educators but the ethic of teacher involvement and classroom research is more widely a source of pride and self-esteem.

The Project made thinking of sex equity commonplace in this school system. It was not before. It is now. NSEDP brought attention to the storehouse of WEEA materials, and left many for District use. It demonstrated with clarity that true equity is presently beyond the understanding and will of public education, but that a small group of dedicated teachers can enrich their schools in the very act of searching for ways to make student and educator alike aware of the ubiquity and hurt of discrimination. In a way the NSEDP people left behind much more than they brought in from Washington.



Teachers at a Sex Equity Workshop